LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Amended) A certificate system connectable to a client terminal and to a seller terminal across a network, comprising:

a certificate authority connected to said network, said certificate authority adapted to allow the definition of a virtual certificate through said seller terminal across said network, said virtual certificate corresponding to a commodity having a value and a first public identifier, wherein said commodity corresponds to any of a product, a service, a coupon, and a reservation, said commodity selected by a seller at said seller terminal in communication with said certificate authority across said network, said associated with a redemption location, and wherein said first public identifier is defined by said certificate authority;

a certificate issuance module for creation of an issued certificate upon selectable acquisition of said virtual certificate by an acquirer user at said client terminal across said network, for receipt of external payment information sent by said acquirer user from said client terminal, and for transmission of information associated with said issued certificate to a holder, said holder comprising any of said acquirer user and an alternate recipient specified by said acquirer user, wherein said issued certificate comprises said redemption denomination and said first public identifier, said creation of said issued certificate associated with a private identifier which is assigned at time of said acquisition of said virtual certificate, wherein said private identifier does not appear on said issued certificate, and wherein said redemption denomination, said first public identifier, and said assigned private identifier are stored at said certificate authority in association with said issued certificate;

a certificate authentication module for authorization of an off-line redemption of said issued certificate at said redemption location to said holder of said issued certificate, said holder comprising any of said acquirer user and said alternate recipient of said issued certificate to whom said acquirer user has communicated said private identifier, said authorization based upon a communication from said redemption location to said certificate authority of said redemption denomination and said first public

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identifier from said issued certificate, a communication of said private identifier provided by said holder, and a matching comparison of said redemption denomination, said first public identifier, and said private identifier stored at said certificate authority; and

means to cancel further redemption of said issued certificate at said certificate authority.

2. (Previously Presented) The certificate system of Claim 1, wherein said defined virtual certificate further comprises a second public identifier defined by said issuer user, wherein said second public identifier is stored at said certificate authority, and wherein said authentication module requires a submittal of said second public identifier, and a matching comparison to said second public identifier stored at said certificate authority.

3. (Previously Amended) The certificate system of Claim 1, wherein said external payment information sent from said acquirer user to said certificate issuance module comprises a payment agent external to said system.

4. (Previously Amended) The certificate system of Claim 3, wherein said payment agent external to said system comprises an authorization to transfer funds from said payment agent for said acquirer upon creation of said issued certificate.

5. (Previously Amended) The certificate system of Claim 3, wherein said payment agent external to said system comprises an authorization to transfer funds from said payment agent for said acquirer upon redemption of said issued certificate.

6. (Previously Presented) The certificate system of Claim 1, wherein said certificate issuance module comprises means to deliver said redemption denomination, said first public identifier, and said assigned private identifier to said acquirer user.

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7. (Previously Presented) The certificate system of Claim 6, wherein said means to deliver said redemption denomination and said first public identifier to said acquirer user comprises a printed form of said issued certificate.

8. (Previously Presented) The certificate system of Claim 6, wherein said means to deliver said redemption denomination and said first key identifier to said acquirer user comprises an electronic form of said issued certificate.

9. (Original) The certificate system of Claim 1, wherein said holder of said issued certificate is said acquirer user.

10. (Previously Presented) The certificate system of Claim 1, wherein said holder of said issued certificate is said alternate recipient who submits said private identifier.

11. (Previously Presented) The certificate system of Claim 1, wherein said assigned private identifier is entered by said acquirer user during said selectable acquisition of said virtual certificate.

12. (Previously Presented) The certificate system of Claim 11, wherein said entered, assigned private identifier is uniquely associated with a single acquired issued certificate.

13. (Previously Presented) The certificate system of Claim 11, wherein said entered, assigned private identifier is a private purchase identifier unique to said acquirer user.

14. (Previously Presented) The certificate system of Claim 11, wherein said entered, assigned private identifier is a private acquirer facility access identifier unique to said acquirer user.

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15. (Previously Presented) The certificate system of Claim 1, wherein said assigned private identifier is established by said certificate authority during said selectable acquisition of said virtual certificate.

16. (Previously Amended) A process within a transaction network connectable to a client terminal and to a seller terminal, comprising the steps of:

defining a virtual certificate on a certificate authority through said seller terminal across said network, said defined virtual certificate corresponding to a commodity having a value and a first public identifier, wherein said commodity corresponds to any of a product, a service, a coupon, and a reservation, said commodity selected by a seller at said seller terminal in communication with said certificate authority across said transaction network, said seller associated with a redemption location, and wherein said first public identifier is defined by said certificate authority;

creating an issued certificate upon acquisition of said virtual certificate by an acquirer user at said client terminal across said transaction network, upon receipt of external payment information sent by said acquirer user from said client terminal, and for transmission of information associated with said issued certificate to a holder, said holder comprising any of said acquirer user and an alternate recipient specified by said acquirer user, wherein said issued certificate indicates said commodity selected by said seller and said first public identifier, said creation of said issued certificate associated with an establishment of a private identifier which does not appear on said issued certificate, said indicated commodity, said first public identifier, and said established private identifier stored at said certificate authority in association with said issued certificate;

authorizing an off-line redemption of said issued certificate at a redemption location to said holder of said issued certificate, said holder comprising any of said acquirer user and said alternate recipient of said issued certificate to whom said acquirer user has communicated said private identifier, wherein said authorization is based upon redemption submittal at said redemption location of said indicated commodity and said first public identifier from said issued certificate, a communication

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of said private identifier provided by said holder, and a matching comparison of said indicated commodity, said first public identifier, and said private identifier stored at said certificate authority; and

       canceling further redemption of said issued certificate at said certificate authority.

17. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 16, wherein said step of defining said virtual certificate, wherein said defined virtual certificate comprises a second public identifier defined by said issuer user, wherein said step of creating said issued certificate includes the storage of said second public identifier at said certificate authority, and wherein said step of authorizing said redemption of said issued certificate comprises a submittal of said second public identifier, and a matching comparison to said second public identifier stored at said certificate authority.

18. (Previously Amended) The process of Claim 16, wherein external payment information sent from said acquirer user comprises a payment agent external to said system.

19. (Previously Amended) The process of Claim 18, wherein said payment agent external to said system comprises an authorization to transfer funds from said payment agent for said acquirer during said step of creation of said issued certificate.

20. (Previously Amended) The process of Claim 18, wherein said payment agent external to said system comprises an authorization to transfer funds from said payment agent for said acquirer during said step of redemption of said issued certificate.

21. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 16, wherein said step of creation of said issued certificate comprises a delivery of said redemption denomination and said first public identifier to said acquirer user.

22. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 21, wherein said delivered redemption denomination and said first public identifier are included in a printed form of said issued certificate.

23. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 21, wherein said delivered redemption denomination and said first public identifier are included in an electronic form of said issued certificate.

24. (Original) The process of Claim 16, wherein within said authorizing step, said holder of said issued certificate is said acquirer user.

25. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 16, wherein within said authorizing step, said holder of said issued certificate is said alternate recipient.

26. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 16, wherein said established private identifier is entered by said acquirer user.

27. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 26, wherein said entered established private identifier is uniquely associated with a single acquired issued certificate.

28. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 26, wherein said entered established private identifier is a private purchase identifier that is unique to said acquirer user.

29. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 26, wherein said entered established private identifier is a private acquirer facility access identifier that is unique to said acquirer user.

30. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 16, wherein said established private identifier is established by said certificate authority and communicated to said acquirer.

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